



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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IN REPLY PLEASE

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July 13, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Donald L. Wolfe
Acting Director of Public Works

IMPROVING STORMWATER QUALITY, FLOOD PROTECTION, AND PROVIDING OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

The cost to meet the evolving and stringent stormwater and urban water runoff regulations continues to increase. The cost to develop, construct, and maintain these projects is anticipated to be in the hundreds of millions per year. Also, there is a demand that the projects provide other benefits, such as flood protection, water supply, recreation, open space, wastewater management, and wildlife habitat restoration. Therefore, identifying a stable and long-term revenue source to finance these multiple benefit projects and to help address regulations are a critical priority for the County, the cities, and other organizations that have an interest in improving the quality of the environment for residents in the County.

To address the issue, the American Society of Civil Engineers formed and facilitates the Los Angeles Regional Watershed Infrastructure Funding Workgroup. This workgroup is made of public and private agencies, environmental organizations, and individuals working cooperatively to complete an integrated, long-term regional watershed management plan for the County by 2007 and to pursue a voter-approved funding mechanism for the plan by 2008. Attachment A is a list of the participants and the structure of the workgroup.

This is a significant and unprecedented effort for the County of Los Angeles. The proposed Countywide Integrated Watershed Management Plan will detail goals, strategies, projects (structural solutions) and programs (nonstructural solutions), and their costs to address stormwater quality and provide other benefits. The plan will describe benefits that communities, public agencies, and other organizations in the County would receive by implementing the projects and programs in the plan.

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Most importantly, the plan will propose a stable and long-term funding mechanism to finance, in whole or in part, the projects and programs in the plan. The plan will also detail the amount of revenue anticipated from the funding mechanism, why the revenue is necessary, potential sources of matching State and Federal funding, and how the revenue is to be used.

The plan will be developed through an iterative process involving input from the workgroup; elected officials; the general public; private, public, and nonprofit organizations; and consultants. The subcommittees of the workgroup are developing strategies for the development of the proposed plan. They are also evaluating stable and long-term funding mechanisms; identifying opportunities for local, State, and Federal funding; addressing political and logistical gaps and barriers; and identifying funds to finance the effort. To date, a consultant hired through the City of Long Beach has provided administrative and strategic support for the workgroup. We will eventually be placing an item on the Board agenda for the County's share of the cost of continued administrative support services for your approval.

A primary and important goal of the workgroup is for the electorate in the County to support this effort. As an initial step, we will be setting up meetings with your staff in the next few weeks to discuss this effort as well as other watershed management issues in more detail, answer any questions that you may have, and engage your offices in the process.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may call Terri Grant at (626) 458-4309.

HJB:kk

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Attach.

cc: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Office

ATTACHMENT A

Los Angeles Regional Watershed Infrastructure Funding Workgroup

The structure of the workgroup is as follows:

- Steering Committee
Chair: Mr. Carl Blum, American Society of Civil Engineers
Cochair: Mr. Michael Drennan, Brown and Caldwell
- Plan Development Subcommittee
Chair: Mr. Donald L. Wolfe, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
- Funding Subcommittee
Chair: Mr. Robert P. Tanowitz, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation
- Public Relations Subcommittee
Chair: Mr. Larry Forester, City of Signal Hill and Coalition for Practical Regulations

Current list of public agencies in the workgroup:

- Chief Administrative Office of the County of San Diego
- City of Long Beach
- City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation
- City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
- City of Santa Monica
- City of Signal Hill
- County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles)
- Riverside County Flood Control District
- Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
- Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

Current list of nonpublic agencies in the workgroup:

- Building Industry Association
- Coalition for Practical Regulations
- Construction Industry Coalition for Water Quality
- Heal the Bay
- Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council
- Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
- TreePeople